UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/23287
13 December 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 13 DECEMBER 1991 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 6 September 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognized the independence of the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but did not, however, take measures to withdraw its sizeable and well-armed forces from the territory of these countries. There exists no treaty or any other agreement permitting the Soviet Union to station its armed forces in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania. Thus, there is no justification for Soviet armed forces to remain on the territory of the Baltic States.

In the statements by the USSR State Council on the recognition of the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Council proposed convening negotiations "to resolve an entire complex of issues associated with securing civil rights, as well as economic, political, military, border, humanitarian and other questions that concern the USSR and its component States". However, until now only preliminary talks have been held and no official negotiations have been initiated, although the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have repeatedly expressed their interest in such negotiations.

On 31 October 1991 the Foreign Ministry of Lithuania transmitted a note to the Foreign Ministry of the USSR stating that the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet army from the territory of the Republic of Lithuania was the main objective in the process regulating the relationship between Lithuania and the USSR. The definitive view on this matter was presented in a resolution adopted by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania on 27 August 1991 as well as in a statement issued by the Baltic Council on 5 October 1991.

At the present time, as the Soviet State disintegrates, there exits the real possibility that the former Union will be unable to continue to govern the activities of its armed forces stationed in the Baltic States. Some officers responsible for the units in the Baltic States have openly suggested the possibility of remaining in the Baltic region despite orders to the contrary from Moscow. In addition, in recent weeks, representatives of extremist groups in the former Soviet Union have publicly challenged the

legitimacy of Baltic independence and threatened the Governments of the Baltic States. This precarious situation is a threat to peace and security in the Baltic area.

We strongly believe the United Nations can play an effective role in reducing the threat this situation poses and in facilitating the removal of foreign troops from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We respectfully request Your Excellency to closely monitor the developing situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in particular through the Office of Research and the Collection of Information.

We would be grateful if you have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Heino AINSO
Chargé d'affaires
Permanent Mission of Estonia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Aivars BAUMANIS
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Latvia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Anicetas SIMUTIS
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Lithuania
to the United Nations